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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9815
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 000083

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND EEB/TPP/IPE
STATE PASS TO USTR FOR JASON BUNTIN
USDOC/ITA FOR TYLER HOFFMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2017
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [KIPR](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE SAYS "LET'S WORK
TOGETHER"

REF: A. RIYADH 0040
[B](#). 08 RIYADH 1435
[C](#). 08 RIYADH 1807

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires David Rundell for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Econcouns and Econoff met with Ministry of Culture and Information (MOCI) Deputy Minister Abdul Rahman Al-Hazzaa and MOCI Director General of Copyrights Obaidallah Obaidallah in their offices on January 11th to discuss ongoing efforts to combat intellectual property rights (IPR) violations. Al-Hazzaa expressed dismay at the current state of IPR protection in the Kingdom and said that Saudi Arabia has "been failing" in efforts to enforce IPR protection in the last year. However, he proudly listed a number of efforts made in the last six months:

-- populating a searchable on-line database with information on ongoing IPR cases;

-- raiding and investigating warehouses and shops carrying pirated goods, often resulting in their closure;

-- censuring and closing of cafes operating satellite television without commercial licensing, and;

-- implementing a "name-and-shame" strategy of both public articles announcing these closures, as well as signs placed on the doors of closed establishments that say "Closed by the Ministry of Culture for Selling Counterfeit Goods." (Note: Al-Hazzaa claimed that he personally traveled with these signs in the trunk of his car and would be "happy to use all of the 3000 he had printed." End Note.)

[2](#). (C) In addition, al-Hazzaa said he would personally ensure that ongoing cases against IPR violators go before the Board of Grievances in 2009, which would result in higher penalties and sentencing. (Note: So far, no case has proceeded beyond the Violations Review Committee (VRC), and many have been settled out of court as reported ref A. End Note.)

[3](#). (C) Al-Hazzaa and Obaidallah both stressed a lack of capacity their staff faces with regard to understanding IPR enforcement, and said that though they have enough inspectors, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. should work together to build a greater understanding of what constitutes an IPR violation. Al-Hazzaa specifically requested training by U.S. customs or other law enforcement officials. On January 12, Econoff solicited Saudi nominations for training at the U.S. Patent and Trade Office (USPTO) to the MFA, and informed al-Hazzaa of the request via telcon. Al-Hazzaa's elatedly responded "Wonderful, how many people can I send?"

¶4. (C) Comment: The MOCI continues to demonstrate the political will to address IPR violations and enforce legislation to combat them. Limited understanding of the problem hampers full enforcement but Al- Hazzaa's eagerness to collaborate with U.S. officials and to avail his team of U.S. training speaks strongly of the SAG's commitment to fighting piracy. End comment.
RUNDELL